

rewarded by a generous enthusiasm for the foundation and endowment of monasteries. Men seemed to think that all that was good in the Catholic Church would henceforth come, like Lanfranc and Anselm, from the cloister. The Norman barons and knights, who had stepped into the land and property of the Saxon thanes, were carried away by the contagious enthusiasm, or followed the prevailing fashion. As the race which they were succeeding had supplied the land with parish priests, so they supplied it with monks. It seemed that they expected the monk to take the place of the priest. They found a special delight in 'appropriating' to the monasteries the tithes with which their predecessors had endowed the parish clergyman. It was not till the enthusiasm of the movement was over that it was seen how fatal had been the policy. The monasteries proved to be only of temporary value in the religious life of the nation. But in the ardour of those* early years the interest of the priest had been sacrificed to that of the monk. In many cases the monastery itself was rector now, and held all the tithe and church dues, merely allowing some small stipend to support a vicar. In other cases it had a greater or less part of the tithes, the rest belonging of right to the incumbent. The result was that the resident parish clergy were nearly always miserably poor; the monks appointed such uneducated and inefficient men as would perform the duties for next to nothing; not infrequently the livings were left actually vacant.¹

But it was only in the fourteenth century that men realised what mischief had been done. Then, at last the evil effects became fully apparent even to the Bishops; to everyone, in fact, except the monasteries. But they had the tithe safe in their possession, and neither State nor Church could get it from them. The Bishops, as the champions of the * secular * clergy, complained continually of the selfish conduct of the * regulars * in letting so much parish work go to ruin in order to swell the revenues of the cloister,^a But, loudly as they sometimes spoke out, the Bishops, with a short-sightedness

¹ *Ecclesiastica Taxatio*, ed. 1804; M&S. *Clerical Subsidies*, Record Office; *Register of Worcester Priory* (Gaiuden Soc.s.); *State of the Realm*, 15 B. II. 6; Wilkin, iii. 240-1, arts. 5 and 18.

² Oibson, ii. 83-5, appendix, ii. 748-0, ii. 7&5; Lyndwood, *Const. JPrm?*, 60.